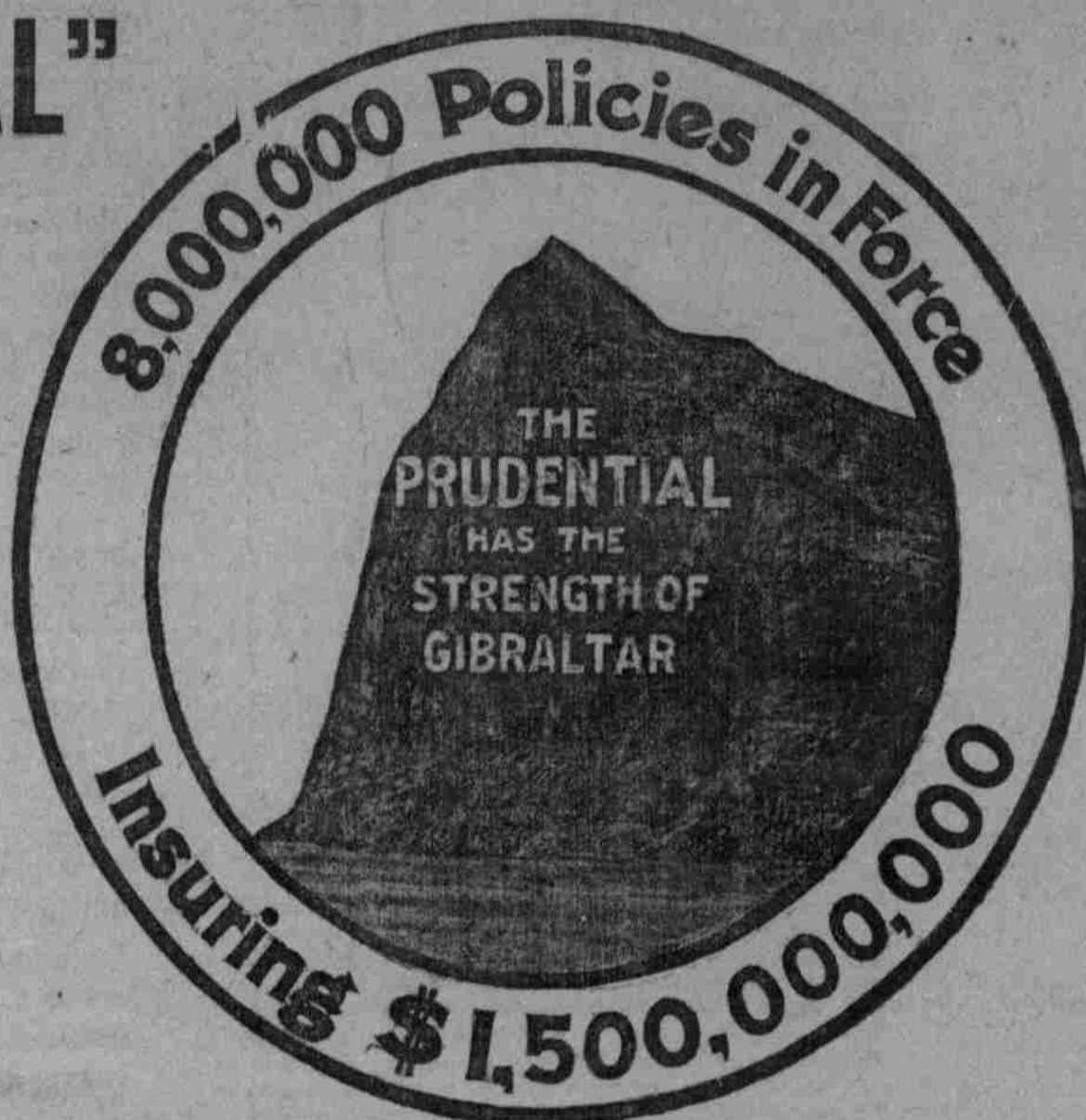


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A RETIRED BURGLAR'S STORY

By WILLARD C. IRVING.

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I've had every avenue of escape cut off. I've been chased over tin roofs. I've been shot at, but I never was appalled but once, and that was by silence.

I'd served a term for burglary, spent what money I'd been given on getting out and was looking for a job—not a job of honest work. I'd tried that on getting out once before and found it impracticable. When an ex-convict knows that he's liable any moment to be spotted and discharged it takes the zest out of him for work. I'd made up my mind there was nothing left for me to do but stick to my business, which was burglary. Well, as I was saying, I was looking for a house to get into and, walking on the outskirts of a city, saw one that struck me as being very inviting. It was in the center of a six acre lot, with no neighbors near enough to make it unpleasant for the burglar and a wood in the rear affording a safe retreat. I made a careful survey of the premises. No one happened to be visible in or about it at the time, but there was plenty of evidence that it was occupied. Newly

washed clothes were hanging on the lines; smoke was issuing from the chimneys; children's sleds and wagons were scattered about in the yard. The only thing I didn't like about it was snow, but it was old snow.

The night was cold and blustery. At about 10 o'clock I took position in the yard, shielded from the wind by a carriage shed, with a view to determining by the lights what rooms were occupied. The whole house was lighted. I got into a vehicle and sat watching my quarry. The seat was comfortable, and some blankets and robes that had been left in it kept me warm. The result was that I fell asleep.

When I awoke every light in the house was out. A distant clock struck 1. I got out, went to the house, took a pane of glass out of a kitchen window, turned the "catch," raised the sash softly, pulled myself up and crawled inside. Striking a match, I lit my dark lantern and surveyed the room. Everything had been put in order after the evening meal. A fire was burning in the range. I went through a pantry to the dining room. Here, too, all was in order.

Passing through the parlors, I entered the hall and went upstairs, taking every precaution against waking the inmates. A bedroom door near the landing stood ajar. I listened, but could hear no one breathing. I went in and felt of the bed. There was no one in it. There being nothing of value in the room, I passed on to the next, examined it and found it also empty.

Coming to one of the front bedrooms, I certainly expected to find it occupied and entered it with all possible stealth, listening long for the sound of a sleeping being. That I heard no such sound began to affect my nerves. An empty room is a good find for a burglar, but the advantage in this case was overcome by the unexpected vacancy. I groped my way to the bed, felt of it and found it unoccupied. Then, flashing my lantern about, I saw a woman's clothing that had been evidently taken off at bedtime lying on the chairs. The woman had vanished.

I went to another room and another with the same result. In some of them I found clothing that had been laid aside, but no one in the beds. None of the beds showed signs of having been occupied. I went on to every story, and not a single living being did I find. There was some plunder on the dressers, but not very much. I did not think of taking it. My mind was fixed upon the lights I had seen in the house a few hours before and the present absence of those whom the lights had served.

There is no similarity between daylight and dark for weird impressions. One human being, even if a policeman, would have broken the spell. I feared a haunted house, but I feared more that something in my brain had gone wrong. Had that which I had seen in the afternoon and evening been an hallucination or did I now experience something that was not? Coming to a window overlooking the rear yard, I

flashed my lantern down into it. There were the clothes still hanging on the line. I walked back through the hall, bringing my feet down heavily on the floor that I might hear a sound. The carpet was thick, and there was but a faint response—a response that added to my growing terror.

Suddenly the rays of my lantern struck a living figure. At once my instinct of preservation ordered me to cover my light. I did so and waited. There was no sound. Believing I had been mistaken, I mustered courage to raise the lantern again. There was the figure, but it was my own reflected from a mirror.

I now had but one desire—to get out and away. Descending to the main floor, I saw a piece of yellow paper on the floor. What prompted me to pick it up I don't know, but I did and read: "Mother dying. All come at once."

Here was a clue. The hour of sending and receipt of the telegram was written out and gave evidence that it had been delivered while I was asleep in the carriage shed. The family had doubtless hurried to a train, taking even the servants with them.

I could have taken away anything I could find, but I was so rattled that I had no desire to do so. I went away empty handed and the next day resolved to go at legitimate work, a resolution I keep even to the present day.

Have you ever noticed that you no sooner get one trouble off your hands than another comes along?—Atchison

BRITAIN IS SPLIT IN TWO

Whole Island in Wild Uproar Over Clash in House

20,000 CHEER RADICALS

As They Protest Against the Action of the Lords—Suffragists Get Busy Again and Attempt to Break Up Meetings.

London, Dec. 6.—The whole of Great Britain is immersed in the political campaign which has been caused by the refusal of the House of Lords to consent to the budget.

The country is divided into two great camps, composed of those who support the Lords' action and those who contend that the House of Commons must have absolute control of the finances of the nation. There are, of course, many other issues, such as tariff reform versus free trade, but these are being pushed into the background by the conflict between the two houses.

While the various local organizations are busy selecting candidates and preparing for the contests in their respective districts, the leaders of the great parties are carrying on a general campaign.

The Radicals, who had long foreseen the fate of their finance bill, are not allowing the grass to grow under their feet. In London Saturday afternoon, one of their organizations, the National Democratic league, held a demonstration as a protest against the action of the Lords, which was one of the most notable that has ever been held in the metropolis.

Fully 20,000 persons, mostly of the laboring and artisan classes, gathered in Trafalgar square and cheered the Radical speakers, who condemned in unmeasured terms the members of the upper chamber.

The only divergent note here, as elsewhere, came from the suffragists, who, after a term of comparative quiet, again engaged in efforts to break up the Radical meetings. The Trafalgar square crowd, however, was too great for their efforts to have any effect.

They were more successful at Southampton, where, by climbing to a roof and shouting through the skylight, they succeeded in interrupting Winston Spencer Churchill's meeting, and at Leith, where, aided by crowds, they created a diversion by attempting to break up a meeting.

MAGAZINE REVIEW

Grooming the Dog.

If the dog has plenty of exercise, he will seldom need to be washed; his pores will be shaken by the perspiration induced by running about. Closely conditioned dogs, however, need to be bathed at fairly frequent intervals. In any case, the use of water will not be needed so often if the dog is brushed every day, as when this attention is neglected. It is best to use a brush of bristles, and, in the case of long-haired dogs, the bristles must be nearly an inch and a half long, if they are to penetrate to the skin. The brushing always should be done one way, that is, not against the hair, and the use of the brush may be supplemented to good advantage by woolen gloves and the bare hands, which will impart a luster to the coat.—Suburban Life for December.

Twenty Thousand Canaries Imported Yearly.

More than 20,000 canaries are brought from foreign lands and sold each year in this country, according to Suburban Life for December. The greater portion of all the cage birds sold in this country come from the Hartz mountains. More than three hundred years ago, a sailing vessel from the Canary islands, having on board a large number of the small birds of that island, was shipwrecked off the coast of Italy. Those on board liberated the birds before going themselves ashore, and the birds flew to land, where many of them were captured and bred for their beautiful songs. They were very small birds, having a rusty green shade of color in their plumage, and their beautiful voices were all there was to recommend them. Since then, the bird raisers of foreign countries have, from these crude originals, developed beautiful specimens of many shapes and various shades of coloring.

TRIAL BY RICE.

The Way Suspected Criminals in Bengal Are Treated.

They have peculiar methods of trying suspects in Bengal. One of these is called "trial by rice," says a writer in the Wide World Magazine. After a priest had been consulted as to an auspicious day every person suspected add those who were usually near the place at night were ordered to be present at 10 o'clock that morning. On that date all turned up. First the people were made to sit in a semi-circle, and a "plate" (a square of plantain leaf) was set before each. Then a priest walked up and down chanting and scattering flowers. These said flowers, by the way, must be those which are facing the sun. This ceremony over, one of the clerics went to each man and gave him about two ounces of dry raw rice and told him to chew it to a pulp. Then commenced what looked like a chewing match. After about ten minutes had elapsed they were told to stop and eject it into the plantain leaf. All did so easily with the exception of three men. In the case of these three the chewed rice had in two cases become slightly moistened, but not sufficiently so to allow of its being easily ejected, and they had much ado to get rid of it. The third man had chewed his into flour, and it came out as such, perfectly dry. One of these three men promptly commenced to cry and begged for mercy, confessing everything and stating that man No. 3, who had acted as a kind of flour mill, was the chief instigator. It is a curious fact that fear, arising from an evil conscience, prevents saliva coming to the mouth, with the result described.

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